

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01844 130341Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20
ACDA-12 IO-14 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DOE-15 SOE-02 /121 W
-----114306 130343Z /75/41

R 112240Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7001

UNCLAS OTTAWA 01844

FOR STATE EUR/CAN

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (OMISSION OF LINE IN PARA
FIVE, BETWEEN LINES FIVE AND SIX)

FOR USICA/IEU

EO 11652 NA
TAGS NA

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - NEUTRON BOMB

REF: OTTAWA 1687

1. SUMMARY: FOR PAST WEEK MEDIA COVERAGE OF PRESIDENT
CARTER'S STATEMENTS ON NEUTRON BOMB HAS FOCUSED PRIMARILY
ON FACTUAL NEWS ACCOUNTS CARRIED BY U.S. WIRE SERVICES
(SEE OTTAWA 1687). MORE RECENTLY, HOWEVER, EDITORIALS HAVE
APPEARED IN REGIONALLY CIRCULATED TORONTO STAR, TORONTO
SUN, LE DEVOIR AND VANCOUVER SUN. TO DATE, NATIONALLY
CIRCULATED TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL HAS CARRIED NO COMMENT
AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA HAVE LIMITED COVERAGE TO BRIEF NEWS
REPORTING FEATURING CARTER'S APRIL 7 STATEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. AN APRIL 10 EDITORIAL IN TORONTO STAR VIEWS PRESIDENT
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CARTER'S HANDLING OF THE NEUTRON BOMB A "MAJOR GAMBLE"
WHICH MIGHT THREATEN THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE. THE STAR
MAINTAINS THAT UNLESS THE SOVIETS OFFER MAJOR ARMS
REDUCTION CONCESSIONS THE BOMB SHOULD BE PRODUCED AND
DEPLOYED IN EUROPE AS "THE BEST MEANS AVAILABLE
TO RESTORE THE MILITARY BALANCE AND DETER WAR."

3. A LEAD EDITORIAL IN THE VANCOUVER SUN (APRIL 10) ON DISARMAMENT AND NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTIONS REFERS TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S POSITION ON THE NEUTRON WEAPON AS AN "UNCOMFORT-ABLE COMPROMISE" BUT COMMENT IS GENERALLY SYMPATHETIC TO U.S. POSITION. AN APRIL 8 EDITORIAL "NEUTRON WAR HEAD DECISION" IN THE VANCOUVER SUN SUGGESTS THAT CARTER'S POSITION MIGHT NOT SATISFY EVERYONE AND THAT HIS "EQUIVO-CATION" MAY HAVE ANGERED SOME. BUT THE SUN CONCLUDES THAT "MR CARTER HAS PUT THE BALL SQUARELY IN THE RUSSIAN COURT. HOW THEY WILL RETURN IT WILL DECIDE NOT ONLY THE TRUTH OF THEIR OWN PROPAGANDA, BUT THEIR READINESS TO REDUCE THE TENSIONS THAT ARE CURRENTLY UNDERMINING DETENTE."

4. THE TORONTO SUN CARRIED COMMENT ON APRIL 7 BY LUBOR ZINK, ULTRA CONSERVATIVE OTTAWA COLUMNIST. ACCORDING TO ZINK, IF PRESIDENT CARTER OPTS AGAINST PRODUCING NEUTRON WEAPONS, IT WOULD AMOUNT TO HANDING WESTERN EUROPE OVER TO THE KREMLIN.

5. LEAD EDITORIAL IN LE DEVOIR BY GEORGESVIGNY ON APRIL 10 CIRCUITOUSLY SUGGESTS THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB IS CRUCIAL ONLY IN ITS ABSENCE SO THAT NOT HAVING IT BECOMES AS DANGEROUS AS HAVING IT. ACCORDING TO LE DEVOIR, EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION IS AGAINST POSSIBLE USE OF THE WEAPON, BUT EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS VIEW BOMB AS NECESSARY TO THEIR SECURITY, ESPECIALLY WITH NO GUARANTEES FROM THE SOVIET

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UNION TO LIMIT NUCLEAR ARMS PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES. VIGNY DOUBTS SINCERITY OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO LIMIT NUCLEAR ARMS AND CONCLUDES BY ASKING: "WILL WE BE CONDEMNED TO SEE MOSCOW JUSTIFY PRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON BOMB AND JIMMY CARTER ACCELERATE A RACE TO ARMS THAT HE CLAIMS HE WANTS TO LIMIT?"

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PRESIDENT, NUCLEAR BOMBS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978OTTAWA01844
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: 1
Expiration:
Film Number: D780157-0501
Format: TEL
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780470/aaaachnz.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 999af0b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 OTTAWA 1687
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3009674
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA REACTION - NEUTRON BOMB
TAGS: SOPN, PARM, MNUC, CA, (CARTER, JIMMY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/999af0b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014